

Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

William B. Travis Bldg. Room 1-111

(Across Congress from TWDB)

1701 North Congress Ave.

Austin, Texas 78701

Minutes

Call to order

SAC Chairman Bob Huston called the meeting to order. The members discussed the schedule for completion of BBEST reports and development of work plans by the Nueces, Brazos, and Rio Grande BBASCs. The members developed a schedule of future meetings to consider these work products. See below for meeting dates.

Approval of meeting minutes from November 2, 2011

The minutes from the November 2, 2011 SAC meeting were approved by consensus.

FY2012 Budget Update

Ruben Solis, TWDB, provided a brief update on the status of the SAC budget.

Liaison Reports

Member Paul Jensen provided an update on the activities of the Brazos BBEST. He explained that various sections of the BBEST report were being assembled. The group has been making an effort to simplify the number of pulses in their recommendations. No estuary recommendations are being developed.

Member Bob Brandes provided an update on the progress of the Upper and Lower Rio Grande BBESTs. It was noted that the Lower BBEST is making progress but the Upper BBEST had not met over the last few months. Both groups will be urged to increase the pace of their efforts due to looming deadlines.

Member Ed Oborny provided an update on the activities of the Guadalupe-San Antonio BBASC. He noted that two subcommittees had been formed to develop initial drafts of work plan elements for the instream and estuary portions. These subcommittees are being assisted by BBEST members.

There was no progress to report regarding the Trinity-San Jacinto, Nueces, and Colorado-Lavaca BBESTs or BBASCs.

Finalize Nueces BBEST Report review

The SAC members began discussions to finalize their review of the Nueces BBEST report. The group reviewed comments that had been compiled from the members, in particular those relating to the BBEST recommendation that site-specific studies be conducted for major

reservoirs as part of the TCEQ rules concerning environmental flows standards. Chairman Huston will circulate revisions to the draft review document with the goal to deliver to the EFAG and BBASC to allow the BBASC ample time to consider SAC comments in their review of the BBEST report.

The SAC review of the Nueces BBEST report will be posted to the Nueces SB3 website upon completion: http://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/water_rights/eflows/nueces-river-and-corpus-christi-and-baffin-bays-stakeholder-committee-and-expert-science-team

Discussion of Future Work Plans

After reviews of the most recent SB3 work plans, the group will discuss development of a status/progress report in order to offer SAC opinions on current and future SB3 activities and direction to the EFAG. Such a progress report could address work plan strategies and summarize agencies/organizations identified as project leads, how the work plans will be executed, and proposed funding mechanisms. The group could also consider whether to merge drought elements with work plan strategies. This will continue to be a topic of discussion at future SAC meetings.

Other Discussion Items

Dan Opdyke, TPWD, has been receiving comments from users of the FRAT application to improve the overall tool. SAC members will provide comments by January 13, 2012. Members briefly discussed whether there is a need to update the HEFR guidance document. These discussions will be addressed at future meetings.

Public comments

Norman Johns, National Wildlife Federation, requested the SAC develop a “big picture” document, to include perspective on TCEQ environmental flows rulemaking. The SAC members will consider this at future meetings.

Jennifer Ellis, National Wildlife Federation, noted that Canada is looking into the Texas SB3 model for environmental flows. She also noted that the Nueces BBASC subgroup that is currently reviewing their BBEST report, will be meeting next on January 11, 2012.

Ray Allen, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program and Nueces BBASC member, noted that the “unsound” determination by the BBEST of Nueces Delta and Bay is a concern of the Nueces BBASC and they will be addressing this specifically at future BBASC meetings.

Discuss Future Meeting Dates and Agenda

The next SAC meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on March 14, 2012 at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department headquarters. Future meetings will be held as follows:

April 18, 2012 at TCEQ

May 16, 2012 at TWDB

Adjourn